

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CB, TH

SUBJECT: THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER MEETING

REF: A. BANGKOK 23442 B. BANGKOK 23669

SUMMARY: THAI AND CAMBODIAN OFFICIALS MET ON BORDER NOVEMBER 17 TO CONCLUDE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONDUCTING RELATIONS THROUGH BORDER LIAISON OFFICES. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING ON RECENT VISIT OF CAMBODIAN DELEGATION TO THAILAND (REF A), RTG FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN VISITED POIPET, CAMBODIA, NOVEMBER 17 TO DISCUSS WITH CAMBODIAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER IENG SARY MODALITIES FOR THE OPERATION OF LIAISON OFFICES AND FOR TRADING. TALKS APPARENTLY WENT WELL, WITH THE TWO SIDES AGREEING ON BASICS FOR CONDUCT OF DAY-TO-DAY RELATIONS.

2. PERSONNEL OF THE THAI LIAISON OFFICE IN ARANYAPRATHET AND THE CAMBODIAN OFFICE IN POIPET WILL FORM A LIAISON COMMITTEE WHICH WILL PROVIDE COMMUNICATION LINKS, SEEK TO RESOLVE ANY PROBLEMS THAT ARISE, AND MAINTAIN FRIENDLY RELATIONS

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BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES, IENG SARY ANNOUNCED. THE THAI

OFFICE WILL BE HEADED BY FIRST SECRETARY SANONG CHARUPHAT, FORMERLY IN THE THAI EMBASSY IN PHNOM PENH AND PRESENTLY WORKING IN THE OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY AT MFA. CHIEF OF THE CAMBODIAN OFFICE WILL BE ONE KHEK BIN. THERE WILL BE A TELEPHONE LINK BETWEEN THE OFFICES.

3. THE LEADERS AGREED TO BEGIN TRADING ON A GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT BASIS, BY BARTER OR, WHERE THE GOODS ARE OF UNEVEN VALUE, WITH SETTLEMENT IN BAHT OR U.S. DOLLARS. CHATCHAI TOLD REPORTERS THAT CAMBODIA WISHES TO BUY FUEL OIL AND SALT (10,000 TONS PER MONTH OF THE LATTER) AND THAILAND, WOOD AND FISH. CAMBODIA REJECTED THE RTG'S OFFER TO REPAIR THE RAILROAD FROM THE BORDER TO POIPET, STATING THAT CAMBODIAN PERSONNEL COULD DO THE WORK. A THAI SOURCE ADDED THAT CAMBODIA HAS ARRANGED DOCKING FACILITIES AT KOH KONG AND POIPET FOR BOATS TO PICK UP THE FISH.

4. AMONG OTHER SUBJECTS DISCUSSED WAS TRAVEL. IENG SARY REPORTEDLY PROMISED THAT THAI COULD VISIT ANGKOR WAT AND THE BORDER AREA, BUT ASKED FOR TIME FOR PREPARATION.

5. THE ONLY UNUSUAL INCIDENT DURING THE DAY'S ENCOUNTER OCCURRED AT THE OUTSET WHEN CAMBODIAN HAK SRENG--THE PRINCIPAL CAMBODIAN PARTICIPANT IN PAST TALKS AT THE BORDER--MET CHATCHAI IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE LINKING THE TWO COUNTRIES. WITH IENG SARY STANDING AT THE CAMBODIAN END 20 FEET AWAY, HAK SRENG ASKED CHATCHAI TO STATE THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT AND REQUESTED A PASS, WHICH APPARENTLY ANNOYED CHATCHAI, WHO WAS IN SIGHT AND EARSHOT OF THAI PRESS. HAK SRENG THEN ASKED HOW MANY PEOPLE THERE WERE IN CHATCHAI'S PARTY AND WHETHER IT INCLUDED ANY JOURNALISTS, AFTER WHICH IENG SARY CAME OVER AND EMBRACED CHATCHAI.

6. COMMENT: THIS CAMBODIAN ACTION WAS STRANGE, ALMOST AS IF THAT SIDE WERE TAKING SPECIAL PAINS TO MAKE THE POINT TO THE THAI THAT CAMBODIA IS FULLY SOVEREIGN AND INDEPENDENT. THE MEETING WAS PRECEDED THE DAY BEFORE BY A GENERAL CLEAN-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UP OF POIPET BY SEVERAL HUNDRED CAMBODIANS GUARDED BY KC SOLDIERS.
WHITEHOUSE

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